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THE SELF-SUPPORTING STUDENT IN AMERICAN COLLEGES.

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THERE are in most American colleges three kinds of students: those who earn none of their college expenses, those who earn some and those who earn all. The proportion of non-self-supporting students is large, but large are also the numbers of the self-supporting men and women; indeed, self-support is one of the most prominent features of the American college life of to-day. It is also a most elusive subject upon which to gather information, and the following statistics and opinions concerning various phases of the subject are, in general, only the willing but frankly subjective estimates of American college presidents or their representatives.

The term "self-supporting" designates in this article both those who earn all their college expenses and those who earn only a part. The article will endeavor to treat of the self-supporting student as a "sub-freshman" or prospective collegian, of the expenses that loom up before him, of his opportunities as an undergraduate for work at the college and in the vicinity, of his earnings, his scholarship and his social standing in the college community. He is a large factor, numerically and economically, in the college world; and indeed it may be seriously asked if the typical "college man" might not be represented more truthfully by the self-supporting student than by the much more familiar hero of the college tales, illustrated weeklies and athletic fields.

Sixty college presidents or their representatives have responded to a request to furnish the statistical information given below. Several large educational divisions of the United States are fairly well represented. The North Atlantic Division is represented by 22 colleges; the South Atlantic Division by 3 colleges; the South Central Division by 4 colleges; the North Central Division by 25 colleges; and the Western Division by 6 colleges.

A regrettable absence of answers from Southern colleges makes much desirable information unavailable concerning a section of our country particularly interesting in its relation to the self-supporting white student.

"Going to college" has never been more popular than at present. The "World Almanac" for 1904 gives a total attendance of 119,496 students in our universities and colleges at the close of the college year of 1901-1902. This fall's "largest entering classes" were especially numerous; great endowments, new and mighty buildings, the development of professional schools, the newspaper interest in educational and athletic matters, and the widespread impression in our schools that college gives the best preparation for the work of life, have centered more strongly than ever the eyes of the preparatory school student upon the goal of a college education. To most students the college course seems a necessary luxury. Parents make heroic efforts to put the child through college, and the students themselves, when it is necessary, join the self-supporting army to wage, as Yale puts it, a "four years' warfare" for the four years' course.

It is difficult to estimate how many students are deterred by financial reasons from undertaking a college course. Twenty-nine colleges out of 60 do not know, or give no answer; of those replying more definitely, 19 believe many preparatory-school students would go to college if they could afford to, while 12 colleges think the number but few. And, indeed, the student who is trying to decide if he can make college expenses and earnings meet might receive "self-help" pamphlets from a score of colleges, and rise from their perusal with no definite impression save a headache. Bates College "sees no reason why a healthy, vigorous student should hesitate for financial reasons to enter"; Wesleyan University believes that "any person in good health can go through college if he will," and similar reports come from Harvard, Cornell, Ohio State University and the University of South Dakota, the president of which writes that he knows of students leaving the University for financial reasons who dressed better than he did.

But St. Lawrence University "could double its attendance in six weeks if it could assure all persons that they could earn their way without interference to their studies." Yet the University of Minnesota states that "self-supporting students are invariably

able, through the kindness of instructors if necessary, to arrange some satisfactory programme." Western Reserve University prints that, with term-time earnings and vacation opportunities, any thrifty and enterprising young man can pay his way through college. Later, in the same pamphlet, however, one who has "been through the mill" says he would not advise a boy to endeavor to earn all his college expenses, save in cases of exceptional ability in skilled work.

The fact seems to be that the exceptional self-supporting student can earn his way, as do, on an average, 25 men in each class of the Yale academical department; but most students must drop out or borrow money, as do half the students of St. Lawrence University, who fail from lack of funds to complete their college course, or those men in the University of Pennsylvania whose effort to earn money exhausts practically all their time and strength. College presidents agree that pluck, endurance and an absence of false pride are necessary, and President Thwing, of Western Reserve, says frankly that the self-supporting student must have an amount of pluck and worthy self-confidence that most men do not possess.

Two additional opinions are noteworthy. Denison University thinks that 50 per cent. of those wishing to attend college are deterred by financial *excuses*, but only 2 per cent. by financial *reasons*. Marietta College believes that many stay away from college, not because they feel they cannot make their way, but because they are unwilling to lose the time that might be devoted to business and the acquisition of financial independence.

So the tide of self-supporting students continues to flow toward the colleges, and the needy freshman finds plenty of company. From Maine to California the self-supporting students form a respectable and much-respected army. In only 4 out of 59 colleges are they estimated as falling below 10 per cent. of the total enrolment, namely, at the Universities of the South, Cincinnati, Missouri and Utah. But in Colby College, Illinois College and Baker University 90 per cent. of the students are believed to be working, wholly or partly, their way through college. Bates College and Rutgers College report 80 per cent. or over, and Dartmouth and the Universities of Vermont, Minnesota and Kansas 70 per cent. or more. Two colleges report between 60 and 70 per cent.; 11 colleges between 50 and 60 per cent.; 3 between 40

and 50 per cent.; and 9 again between 30 and 40 per cent. Harvard reports the number to be very large; the Universities of Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin have no data on hand; the University of Chicago gives over 50 per cent. Yale and the University of Pennsylvania report between 10 and 20 per cent., and Cornell University about 25 per cent.

The figures vary generally, not according to the location of the colleges, but by individual institutions. Two colleges, for instance, in Kansas report 70 and 90 per cent. respectively, and the other 35 per cent. Missouri reports 7 per cent. and Minnesota 70. By great divisions of the country, we find that the average for the 22 North Atlantic colleges is 48 per cent., for the 3 South Atlantic colleges 50 per cent., for the 4 South Central colleges only 18 per cent. The North Central Division with its 25 colleges reaches an average of 45 per cent., and the Western Division falls to 25. For 52 colleges, the percentage is 45; the 18 State universities have an average of 34, and the 34 other colleges an average of 47.

As has been stated, these figures are based upon opinions of colleges rather than upon data at their disposal. Comparatively few colleges have made careful attempts to discover the proportion of self-supporting students in their midst, although, as will be indicated later, the colleges are endeavoring more and more to meet the demands for work rising from the student army of the unemployed. Consequently, it is quite possible that an average of 45 per cent. of self-supporting students, or 53,773 in a total enrolment of 119,496, may be proved later not representative; but it is also true that the average may be either larger or smaller. The college head often cannot tell what the college hands are doing. Students are reticent about their private affairs, and, as one correspondent phrased it, the college president sees many things only through a telescope.

It is equally difficult for the prospective college student to estimate what his necessary and incidental expenses are likely to be, for not only do college expenses vary more or less according to size and location of the institution, but the estimated "low," "medium" and "high" annual expenses published in most college catalogues vary not only in what is included as necessary (tuition, registration, laboratory, gymnasium, library and other fees, board, room, etc.), but also somewhat in the degree in which they include

such other expenses as clothing, amusements, athletics, laundry, travelling, social dues, etc. So it may happen that the "necessary minimum expenses" of \$105 at one college may be higher because of what is omitted than the statement of another college of \$186.47. Nor can the freshman tell definitely from his neighbors' experiences. The University of California has published an exhaustive and illuminating statistical expense account of each of 76 students, prepared by the students themselves; but the total annual expenses range in this collection from \$100 to about \$450. Yet they are declared to represent not "average," but "low," college expenditures.

Averaging the "low" expense estimates of 58 colleges, we have \$216; the "medium" estimates of 41 colleges, \$340; and the "liberal" estimates of 50 colleges give us \$471. It is very probable that the figures upon which the "low" average is based are sufficiently close to the really necessary expenses to make the result of some value as an approximate "national" average. "Medium" and "liberal" estimates are of course more variable. The average "low" expenses of 24 State universities are \$170; of 39 other colleges, \$242; the difference in favor of the State universities may be explained partly by their low or free tuition, and by the lower cost of living in the Central and Western States where the State universities are most prominent and strongest. College expenses in the East average considerably higher than elsewhere. In the North Atlantic Division 22 colleges give as a "low" average \$279, 3 South Atlantic colleges \$184, 4 South Central colleges \$173; while 24 colleges in the North Central Division average "low" \$182, and 6 Western colleges, \$167.

The problem, then, before the self-supporting student is, approximately, how to earn at least \$200 from September to September. He finds at the college offices only a limited amount of "work," and scores of applicants among the students. This labor problem is a constant source of anxious perplexity to the president and his secretary, or the committee on self-help. The college can, to be sure, employ a few students as janitors, bell-ringers, farm-hands, caretakers on the college grounds, and for ordinary carpentry and mechanical work. Students can act as waiters and dish-washers at the college and fraternity eating-houses; they can be proctors, monitors, theme-correctors, assistants in the laboratories, library and gymnasium; at the college

offices clerical work to a limited amount is frequently offered. But all that the college can directly offer in its own service would be but a morsel for the appetite of such a student-body as that of the University of Minnesota, for instance, with its 70 per cent. of self-supporting students. A few college presidents have unsuccessfully experimented with college woodyards, spool and chair-leg factories, etc. But the pay for college work is rarely over 20 cents an hour.

So the colleges have, in increasing numbers, done the next-best thing in instituting free "self-help" agencies, appointment bureaus on the general plan of the teachers' agencies. The student announces that he desires work, and the college bureau seeks it and recommends the student. Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Pennsylvania, Tufts, Maine, Brown, Chicago, Tulane and California are but a few of the colleges thus acting as unpaid middlemen. In this work the college branches of the Y. M. C. A. lend ever-increasing and valuable service, a general secretary being located at many of the larger universities, who, frequently at the expense of the college, canvasses the college town and neighborhood for opportunities for student employment.

The kinds of work done by students, though not unlimited in extent, are practically endless in variety. Dean Hurlburt of Harvard says that it is far easier to enumerate the things students do not do than to tell the ways in which they earn their money. The writer of this article is strongly tempted to dwell at length upon these "student industries," as offering most picturesque and suggestive commentaries upon college life; but reference can be made, fortunately, to several excellent articles treating this romantic side of the question of self-support,* and to the self-help publications of California, Chicago, Western Reserve, Columbia, Yale, Maine, Denison, Minnesota and Wesleyan.

It will be apparent upon the slightest reference to these pamphlets that the college student is not afraid to "tackle" as varied occupations as are listed in a city directory. His ingenuity, frankness, pertinacity and cheerfulness are his great stock in trade. He earns from a dollar to a thousand. He enters college with \$300, and goes to his summer work with a cash balance of 30 cents; or

* "Working One's Way Through College" (two articles), by Alice K. Fallows, *Century*, vol. 44; "Through Harvard on Fifty Cents," Garrison Williams, *Saturday Evening Post*, January 13, 1900; and "How Modern College Students Work Their Way," Forrest Crissey, *Saturday Evening Post*, June 6, 1903.

he appears in September with a debt of \$10 and comes into Commencement week with \$25 to start him out on his summer canvassing. He does everything all the year round in all sorts of ways.

His occupations can be classed, in a rough way, as skilled and unskilled. He takes care of furnaces and lawns, houses and gardens, and receives a room and perhaps a part or all of his board; waiting on tables or washing dishes nets him from a part to all of his food. By manual labor, one Chicago student earned last year all his expenses, including tuition. A young fellow at Columbia drove a truck on Saturdays, while waiting for something better to turn up, and came to the end of the year with \$350. Only a small proportion of the college expenses, however, can generally be earned at the unskilled rate of 15 to 25 cents per hour.

Between skilled and unskilled labor are found many student occupations. Students organize boarding clubs, collect bills, canvass, deliver newspapers, light street-lamps, and act at college as agents for a thousand different things. As a tourist-guide one Columbia man earned \$275 in a season; a student at Minnesota paid his way through college by driving a laundry-cart twelve hours a week. A half-dozen Yale men have acted as a company of pall-bearers, and Wesleyan men have made a market for farm produce from home.

Skilled labor is remunerative. The student gravitates most readily toward tutoring; its fees are never less than 50 cents an hour, and often rise to several dollars. Columbia reports several students as thus earning in a season \$850 apiece. Seventy-one students of Yale earned by tutoring in 1902-1903 a total of \$8,652, an average of nearly \$122. A successful life-insurance canvasser at Pennsylvania earned all his college expenses, his commissions during nine months amounting to \$3,000. Lecturing, preaching, managing playgrounds and recreation centres, teaching in night-schools, newspaper reporting, clerking, running stereopticons, coaching small boys in studies and games, stenography and typewriting—such are a few of the many occupations of fairly large earning power. The general secretary of the Brown Y. M. C. A. quotes preaching as "earning from \$1 to \$10 per week; teaching from \$1 to \$3 per night (20 weeks per year, 3 to 5 evenings per week); clerking, from \$3 to \$5 per week, afternoons and one evening; tutoring, from 50 cents to \$2 per hour; and typewriting 40 cents per hour."

The average amount earned by self-supporting students is problematical. More is earned in city colleges than in institutions in small towns; but the lower college and living expenses offset in some measure the difference. Statistics from Columbia show the earnings of 273 students, in term time during the academic year of 1902-1903, to have aggregated \$39,435.57, making the average earnings of each student \$144.45. When this sum is added to \$163.54, the average earnings of each of 192 students during the vacation of 1903, we have some light upon what the average self-supporting student can do in one city college; his earnings are \$308, about \$150 less than the estimated "low" annual expenses of Columbia.

Student occupations in vacation time are even more varied than term-time "jobs," for in the summer the student is hampered by neither location nor recitation hours. Vacation is literally the student's time for making hay. He turns up everywhere, selling stereoscopic views at the Vermont side-door, harvesting in the Kansas wheat-fields, managing a summer stage-line running into the Yosemite, cooking for a Minnesota lumber-camp, setting type for a Pennsylvania county weekly. He registers you at the hotel desk, shows you to your room, seats you at the dining-table, checks your baggage, sells you your ticket, and takes in his various capacities your tip, all for the cause of education. He surveys the railroad you are travelling upon, calls out the stations, and shovels the fuel into the engine. And he travels considerably more than the majority of his college professors.

The self-supporting student must evidently exercise considerable skill in adjusting his hours of recitations and his hours of labor, that both may be carried without failure. It is an open question how much the self-supporting students are hampered by their outside work. Not all college executives state the case so strongly as does the president of St. Lawrence University, who believes it to be "simply impossible for a student to work all the time or a considerable portion of it and do good work at his studies." Bates says that "students engaged in outside work must be methodical to a degree requiring unusual decision and energy." On the other hand, Cornell University thinks that in the majority of cases the student's college work does not suffer, because the time spent in labor is taken from time otherwise devoted to idleness, pleasure or recreation; a view held also by Dickinson and Minnesota. South

Dakota believes the student can do well, if only he has earned something during the summer.

But only 3 colleges out of 59 believe that self-support is no hindrance to college work. Fifty report that outside work is somewhat hampering, or that it is a hindrance, although only 2 colleges seem to consider it seriously detrimental. A student, as at Harvard, may have to choose between competition for a possible scholarship, meaning consequent total attention to class-room work, and an actual opportunity to earn money, that means, however, renunciation of college financial aid. Not all outside work hampers the student; tutoring, assistance given in laboratory or library, night-school teaching and similar occupations are excellent training for the college man. The extremes are well indicated in two students, one of whom, at California, works several hours daily on a delivery wagon of a clothes-cleaning firm, taking the time absolutely from college work, while the other student, in post-graduate work at Chicago, stated recently to the writer that he had earned the previous season over \$2,000 at tutoring in the vicinity of the University.

It takes indomitable grit to earn one's way through college, and, as Beloit puts it, entire self-support is advisable only in exceptional cases. But for him who is ready for the fight, there is encouragement in the possibility of applying to other college centres the words of Mr. R. A. Myers, secretary of the Columbia University Committee on the Employment of Students, that "a good man almost always finds employment," and that "the resources for earning money in New York city are almost unlimited, and have as yet hardly been tapped." Yet the majority of wholly self-supporting students probably find it necessary to "drop out for a year" once or twice during the college course, to earn as a motorman, machinist, book-agent, or in some other of a hundred trades, sufficient money to complete the college course. And many students do not hesitate to follow in their senior years the advice of several universities to borrow money, to be paid back as soon after graduation as possible.

Concerning the scholarship of self-supporting students, the opinions expressed are very favorable. Of 60 colleges, only 3 rate the class-room work of the laboring student as lower than that of his financially more secure colleague. On the other hand, 17 colleges believe in the higher scholarship of the self-supporting

student, and 26 other institutions state that there is at least no difference in the average rank of the two classes of students. Ten colleges "could not tell," and 4 returned no answer. It is, then, apparently, safe to assume that, although the self-supporting student may be so hampered in his work as to drop out of college sooner or later, the college generally suffers nothing by his presence, but rather gains from the standpoint of its average scholarship.

There are exceptions, of course, in both classes of students, but it is gratifying to notice the frequency of such replies as that of Yale, that 15 of the 19 highest appointments fell, in the class of 1903, to self-supporting students, although in each case they were only about 15 per cent. of their class in the graduating body from the several schools of the University. "This showing," the report continues, "is undoubtedly higher than annual averages would continue to be, but it is safe to say that the scholarship of self-supporting students is higher than that of the others."

At Columbia, Mr. Myers chose recently in alphabetical order the latest college records of 51 students that had applied for work to the Committee on the Employment of Students, and of 51 that had not so applied. Only the limited time at his disposal made impossible a comparison of the complete registration of the college. "The figures," Mr. Myers reports, "certainly give the palm to those working their way through college, and such action is probably just. But, on the other hand, I find that the sterling, wholly responsible *man* is about as hard to find among those working their way as elsewhere." And it is then suggested that all final comparisons of self-supporting and non-self-supporting students should be deferred until twenty years after their graduation.

Lehigh says, very simply, that "self-support does not affect scholarship at all. If a student devotes too much time to outside work his scholarship suffers. On the other hand, a poor student naturally has fewer diversions than a well-to-do student, and so is apt to study harder." Cornell finds, not in the self-supporting student, but in the independent student with a small allowance, the man with the highest average. So it seems evident that scholarship in general does not suffer from the effects of self-support. As Tufts puts it, "the self-supporting students have a higher sense of their responsibilities," and Dartmouth believes that the systematic work of the working students and their apprecia-

tion of an education is conducive to faithful work. The self-supporting collegian may not be able to stand the pace, but he is a good pace-maker while he lasts.

That the American college is a democratic institution, in which worth counts more than wealth, is the sentiment of many replies to the question as to the social standing of the self-supporting student. Not only are the working boys accorded college honors, but class distinction and fraternity fellowship are offered with a most satisfactory readiness to the self-supporting students. Of 59 colleges, 47 report "no difference" in social standing. Dean Hurlburt, in answering from Harvard, voices admirably the sentiment strongly expressed by many other colleges.

"At Harvard there is absolutely no difference between rich and poor, so far as social standing goes. Sometimes a man has to devote himself so closely to his studies that he has no time to take part in the social life of his class, and is known to a few only; but I believe that a man makes of himself what he wants, except when he starts out to obtain social recognition. Usually, a man of this sort fails. The thing that counts here is to be a worker in some one thing, and a man may win distinction in any way he pleases. To be taken into one of the undergraduate clubs a man must be 'clubable,' and if he is this the men ask nothing more. I have known men who have paid every cent of their way taken into societies which those in the undergraduate world who value society life think the most desirable, and men of the greatest wealth who wanted club life, but who were uncongenial, left out. . . . The part of college life I wonder most at and most admire as the years go on is its splendid democracy."

The University of California adds this word: "Any difference in social standing would arise from early training, disposition, personality, habits, tastes, and amount of time and money available for mingling in the interests and pursuits of other students. Of course, the man who is 'hard up' financially may be 'hard up' too in early training, manners and adaptability." Leland Stanford states pertinently that it depends entirely upon the class that forms the judgment.

It is hardly to be expected that the situation is the same in all colleges; there will always be students who are not thoroughly convinced of the dignity of labor. Ten of the colleges report a "slight" difference in the attitude of mind toward the self-supporting student, the Southern colleges being rather more inclined apparently to feel a distinction. Mercer University reports:

"Self-supporting students are valued by their fellows in all college matters, except possibly as regards their eligibility for fraternity membership, simply upon their individual merits. In the question of eligibility for membership in some of the fraternities and of standing socially among the ladies who are interested in college matters (we have not co-education), ready money has its effect as elsewhere in life."

At the other extreme stands the reply from Baker University, that "the students here consider that there is a little premium upon the man or woman who works. Hence some of our students who financially do not need to work take on, nevertheless, a little labor." And at Wabash the self-supporting students are the leaders in all the student organizations. So the almost unanimous verdict of college executives as to "no difference" may be taken with the grain of salt that flavors the letters from Harvard, California, Mercer and Baker, without in the least questioning the undoubtedly vigorous presence of that "splendid democracy" in the American college student-body that is so proudly written and read in the letters just quoted.

There are many phases of the life of the self-supporting students that for reasons of space must remain untreated in this article. The health of working students, the topographical relation of their homes to their colleges, their careers after graduation would be fruitful subjects of investigation. And no study of self-support in American colleges can be complete without attention to the whole subject of the financial aid extended by the colleges in the form of scholarships, gratuities and loans. Since such aid, however, has many of the characteristics of a gift, it has been only barely touched upon in this article, which has aimed to consider the student wholly from the side of his work and its results upon his college life.

Until further statistics materially alter the results obtained from the above-mentioned statements of college executives, it may be said of the self-supporting American student that he and his fellows are going to college in large numbers, and constitute nearly one-half of the entire college student-body of the United States. It is difficult to estimate how many more students would go to college, did they feel that they could earn their college expenses; for those who undertake the "four-years' warfare" the annual expenses can be hardly less than \$200. The college itself can offer to the student comparatively few opportunities for work

within its walls and boundaries, but the self-help bureau will try to find work for him that, if industriously pursued, will bring him in from \$100 to \$150 between September and June. This sum, added to what he can earn during the summer, should meet about two-thirds of his college expenses. His college work will be somewhat hampered by his outside labor, but if he gives to learning his lessons the same energy he devotes to earning money, his scholarship will be fully as good as the average. His social standing will not be impaired by his self-support, unless the time put upon his outside work causes him to neglect ordinary social duties and opportunities. His four years of college life may have to be extended through five from lack of funds, but if he has pluck and seriousness he can win the battle. He can count upon having the respect of president, faculty, and students, and in his hours of hard work he can console himself with the thought that his enforced labor is very probably developing within him the qualities of pluck, endurance and thoughtfulness that later on in life will stand him in excellent stead.

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